



punch

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



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Charivaria

IN a recent speech the FUEHRER said he sensed the feeling of spring. But apparently not across the Channel.

"Ultimately the Nazis will have to give up their *lebensraum* ambitions," says a writer. Then there will be an infiltration of Germans into Germany.

An Italian newspaper says that our army in Libya is in a big trap. The big cheese, however, stays in Rome.

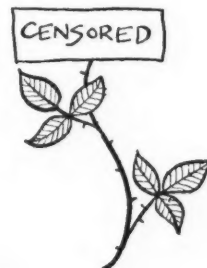
One of Herr HITLER's great problems just now is the Roumanian minority in Roumania.



A radio speaker thinks that Londoners are really countrymen at heart because they are fascinated by workmen digging holes in the road. It would be a pretty idea for the G.P.O. to clothe its telegraph messengers in smocks.

We understand that, owing to the censorship, this year's summer will be held in camera.

Bulgaria has now joined the Axis, but only as a country member of course.



According to a neutral journalist GOERING looks older than his last photograph. As a matter of fact, he *is*—unfortunately.

"One of the worst broadcasters I have ever heard was a famous portrait painter," says a correspondent. Probably he still had his tongue in his cheek.

There are rumours that GOEBBELS is in disgrace and may be forced to resign. It is nice to think that the FUEHRER is giving up *something* this Lent.

"The newspapers and radio in Rome are not generally believed," says a neutral observer. We understand that in desperation Italian airmen are to drop leaflets on the capital telling the inhabitants that Italy is winning.

Sentence of Condensation

"There is no Italian Army to stiffen, nothing but a garrison in Tripoli which will evaporate if the British command decides that the effort to liquidate it is worth while." *Scottish Paper.*

"Do horses in London take any notice of air raid warnings?" asks a writer. It is difficult to tell, because they so often wear their nose-bags at the Alert.



Day's Bad Deed

"The vehicles are stolen during the absence of the driver and his mate, probably when they are having a quick meal or a drink. Scouts drive away such temporarily unattended vehicles when the opportunity arises."—*Daily Mail.*

A jackal in the Rome Zoo recently died. A pity it was that one.



"Nab then, Mozart, you don't 'ave to put on a sloppy look for 'Lights Out'!"

Hotels

I SUPPOSE the first thing anyone notices about an hotel is its name; this name may be half on one tub of laurel on one side of the entrance and half on the other tub, which means, probably, that you won't be able to get a drink; or it may be spread across the whole building, which means that you may be able to send your friends picture postcards saying that your bedroom window is over the right fork of the Y, which is less dreadfully ordinary

than putting a cross. The next thing people notice is how they get into the hotel. That is, by either swing doors or revolving doors.

I think I am safe in saying that no one really likes swing doors, just as no one really likes picking up a very light suitcase and finding it is a very heavy suitcase. You get the same feeling when you ram your hand against a swing door and it doesn't move. Sometimes, though, someone on the other

side of the swing door jerks it open before your hand reaches it, and this is an even funnier feeling, like picking up a very heavy suitcase and finding it is a very light one. But swing doors are nothing to revolving doors.

No one knows who invented revolving doors. It may have been at the back of the inventor's mind that a revolving door would increase the business of an hotel, as some of the people coming out through it would go round too far and find themselves back in the hotel again; but as these same people would be quite as likely, for the same reason, never to get inside the hotel at all, I don't think it can have been this. What I think is that revolving doors weren't invented at all, but have always been in the world, like cold baths, because there is quite an affinity between getting in and out of both of them.

Now for the hotel itself. An hotel may be almost any size, but it will fairly certainly have a sort of hall with a bill showing what will be on at the local cinema the day after you leave; and a little counter with someone looking over it. This is where people sign the hotel register, and the interesting thing about signing an hotel register is that no one is ever sure if you give your full address or just the name of the town, so nearly everyone goes by what the last person put. Upstairs, of course, are the bedrooms. It is rather interesting that so many hotel bedroom windows have a view of some yard or other which is totally invisible from outside the hotel, so that the bedroom window is invisible too; this must be why people staying in the part of the hotel that you can see from the outside are so keen on sending those picture postcards I was telling you about.

As for the bedrooms themselves, I don't know how many people feel there is something wrong when they open a drawer at the bottom of a wardrobe and find it empty. Well, this is because the drawer in an ordinary wardrobe is always full of old curtains and school certificates. People having meals in an hotel have this same feeling of there being something wrong. I think if they analysed it they would put it down to the tablecloth almost reaching the ground and the knives being metal all the way along, and not changing suddenly to something else at the handles.

People in hotels act towards one another very much as they act in trains; that is, they take no notice until they have to, when they wish they had sooner. There is also a rule, as there is in trains, that *other* people in an hotel don't exist away from the hotel.

For example, if two people see each other sitting in the hotel lounge, there is nothing extraordinary about that, because each person is, to the other person, a sort of furnishing for the lounge; but if these two people, a little later, see each other buying Penguins in a bookshop up the street, then it is extraordinary, as much so as if someone who has got out of the train at the same station as you, goes and gets in a car outside, just like a real person. This makes it almost too easy for two people in an hotel to get to know each other, because when once they start they can't stop. The more they talk the more ordinary they find each other, and therefore the more extraordinary. At least, for about three days, until they suddenly see each other in focus and drop the whole thing.

At the same time, people who go on not knowing other people in an hotel find those other people frightfully interesting. If you watch an hotel dining-room closely you will see that it is full of people looking across at other people's tables, telling the people at their own tables to look too, but not to look as if they're looking, leaning slightly sideways to see round a flower-vase, half swivelling their chairs and pretending to study a very dark uninteresting oil-painting on the wall, and so on. And another thing you will see if you watch an hotel dining-room is that every now and then a queer sort of smile, with the beginnings of a coo, will fix itself on a person's face, stay there for five seconds and then disappear quite suddenly. This is because a dog has come out from under the next table and gone back again. There is a rule that dogs in hotel dining-rooms are very funny, and that they are fairly funny in hotel lounges and drawing-rooms, unless the News is just due on the wireless, when people are allowed not to take any notice of them.

Just a few more facts about people in hotels. They are never quite happy about having all the baths they want to, because they have an idea that baths are extras; but they argue that the bathrooms are there and no one seems to want to check up. When they switch the light on or off, from the flex thing hanging down the wall behind their beds, they always feel very faintly pleased and surprised that it does work the light and not the bell; and when they ring the bell on the other flex thing, they are also very faintly pleased and surprised that it doesn't work the light. People are terribly glad when they turn on the hot tap in the basin in their bedroom and hot water comes out—not because they didn't expect it to but because

everyone is always terribly glad when hot water comes out of a hot tap anywhere. People are never quite sure, deep down inside themselves, that they will get their shoes back in the morning, and they are never at all sure that the letter-box in the hall of an hotel works like an outdoors letter-box. Finally, no one feels any different from anyone else about tipping; that is, everyone feels exactly the same as you do.

The Taunton Road

I DO not see how I can well forget
the little lambs new-born to
Somerset,
who dance on rather wobbly woolly
knees
in hilly fields beneath the quiet trees.
I see them as I drive along the road
in my great van with its heavy sway-
ing load.

Spring is not far behind! A purple
haze
hangs on the distant woods. O day of
days!
O kindly Fate that bids me rise and
ride
down catkin-studded lanes, through
groves where hide
the simple snowdrops in their beds of
moss!
O blessed gifts of the American
Red Cross!
The babies' bottles and the union
suits,
the cratefuls of molasses and the boots.
The sky is white and blue, so I
shall sing,
and come to Taunton with such news
of Spring—
I will appear like some immortal
dove,
bringing them Wellingtons and soup
and love!
O life divine, lived in a wagonette
among the little lambs in Somerset!
V. G.



The Mind of Hitler

(Still apologizing as we go)

WHAT is the secret behind the inscrutable mask which the German leader presents to the world during his not infrequent silences? By what thought-processes does he think, and what kind of reasoning, or lack of it, precedes his utterances, his actions, and the intentions that he intends?

To grasp this we are forced to consider the motives that have influenced him before and after his swift rise to power and compare them with the events in which they have ultimately eventuated. Is it too much to say that infantile rebuffs and early disappointments have to some extent moulded his original personality, or that subsequent successes and the passage of time have gone far towards changing or fixing his outlook on life, and determining to no small degree the scope of his ambitions? I believe it is not.

How then can we pierce the veil?

Only, I think, by attempting to see with Hitler's mind, to understand with Hitler's eyes, and to transfer ourselves bodily to the plane of Hitler's consciousness.

This is not so easy as it might appear.

There are many who see in Hitler a combination in almost equal parts of Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Xerxes, Dr. Crippen, Professor Moriarty, Jack the Ripper, von Moltke, Genghiz Khan, and Father Divine.

It is safe to say that this estimate of his character is only partially true.

Far more accurate would it be to assert that while Hitler is prone to sudden accesses of ferocity, boldness and vigour, he is restrained at other times by motives of prudence, indolence or cunning, and that all these divergent strains represent conflicting elements in his mental and physical composition and render his behaviour on some occasions inconsistent with his behaviour on others.

Many stories are told about him which aptly illustrate the truth of this contention.

During a meeting of his principal advisers a long and very complicated scheme was set before him for obtaining the surrender of one of the Balkan States without resorting to open war. The conference had lasted for many hours, the means of political and commercial infiltration had been discussed by diplomat after diplomat, by economist after economist. Ribbentrop had spoken; Hess had spoken; Schacht had given his view. Schacht had been followed by Funk, and Funk by Bunk. Nothing was wanting save the few words which would indicate the Fuehrer's acquiescence in the outlines of the scheme. All eyes were turned

to him; but the few words of consent were not forthcoming. Hitler appeared to be in a reverie, his untrammelled thoughts ranging the universe and far outstripping the petty plans of his accomplices. *It was then discovered that he had been fast asleep all the time.*

On another occasion it is well known that Keitel had begun to point out to him a certain key-position for the Western offensive when the Chancellor roughly interrupted him with the command:

"Den Schmutzfinger weg! Ich kann ja nicht sehen!" ("Take your dirty finger away! I can't see anything!")

The chagrined General reluctantly obeyed, and Hitler at once said, pointing to an entirely different place:

"Also. I intend to attack here."

"But that is not a place at all, Your Excellency," remonstrated Keitel with scarcely concealed indignation. "It is a squashed fly (*zerquetschte fliege*)."

Hitler at once broke into a furious tirade lasting for forty minutes and directed against Capitalism, Karl Marx, the Treaty of Versailles, the pluto-democracies, and the war-mongers who had imprisoned Germany, attempted to restrict her *lebensraum* and deprive her of her place in the sun. He ended by stating that *the map had been made by a Jewish financier in the pay of England, and in any case was upside-down*. It was a long time before he could be pacified, and only the tact of Herr Himmler, who substituted a new map for the original one while the Fuehrer's back was turned, saved the Chief of the German Staff from summary dismissal.

On yet a third occasion half an hour before he was due to make a speech to the world at the microphone in front of a vast assembly of Gauleiters, Storm Troopers, agents of the Gestapo and ordinary citizens in handcuffs, he was found in the largest room of his Chancellery without his notes, and playing quietly with a pet toad.

Such is the man. A mixture of audacity and cowardice; a blend of practical commonsense and dreaminess; a fusion of the cunning political schemer with the wool-gathering wantwit.

How can the riddle be read?

It is a character that will certainly baffle historians for years to come. But whatever conclusion they reach, they are unlikely to deny that he was a leader who, *failing in one project presented to him by his Staff, was always willing to adopt another if it seemed likely to provide a greater or equal chance of success, with the sole proviso that the blame for failure should not rest on his own shoulders and that somebody else worked out the details of the scheme.*

Only if that is understood will the hide-bound originality of Hitler, the cautious audacity of the man, be clearly comprehensible to our minds. Futility, in fact, is so mixed in him with competence that I may best conclude by quoting two statements about him made in my own hearing by the Ambassador of a neutral power.

"Hitler is the greatest man in the world," he declared once at an afternoon reception held in the Royal Bear Garden at Bucharest.

Yet the same man on the same night after a long and complicated dinner laid his head on the table-cloth and murmured, so far as I could understand him, "The greatness of Hitler, you take it from me, old fellow—the greatness of Hitler is an imagination of the figment."

I am more than half inclined to agree.

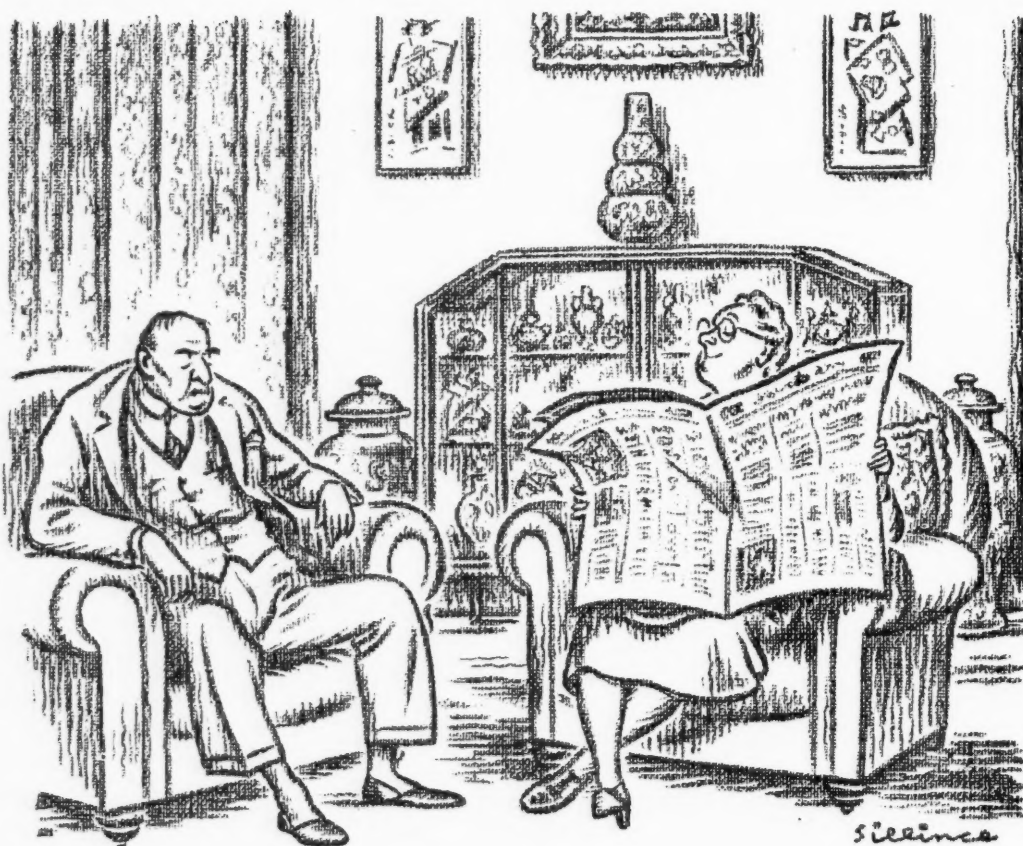
EVOE.





THE LIGHT-BRINGER

Mr. Morrison drives the Sun.



"I see the newspapers now confirm that it was bitterly cold down here six weeks ago when our pipes burst."

Compass Swinging

ALL compasses in His Majesty's aircraft must periodically be checked for errors. So it happens that every now and again the Navigation Officer sends a rude little note to the Flight Commander reminding him in pointed phrases that one of his aircraft is due to be swung. The Flight-Commander's eyes narrow slightly and he reaches for the phone. After a short running fight he drops the receiver. His eye falls on you. It always does.

Now the first thing to remember about compass swinging is to be calm and methodical. So you get a piece of paper and write down the magic terms *Co-efficients A, B, and C*. You also jot down the eight cardinal points and draw a few columns with *Deviation* marked at the top.

The next step is to procure a landing-compass and two airmen. The men are easy enough to find but have a habit of being called away on important jobs if you turn your back. The landing-compass, on the other hand, requires an hour's frantic search before it is run to ground in Flying-Officer Aileron's golf-bag, but once you find it it will remain on your charge until you are posted or otherwise removed from the strength.

Anyway, you now have both airmen and landing-compass, so you walk to the far corner of the aerodrome, unpicket the aircraft, sit yourself in the pilot's seat and start her up. You then turn her on to where you imagine North to be and sing out to the men to take a peep. They thereupon position themselves with the landing-compass

about twenty yards ahead and take turns at peering into its dial. After a discussion they agree that the aircraft is headed 002 degrees, and one of them comes back to tell you.

This is where you have to think hard. The true bearing is 002 degrees whereas the aircraft compass says 359 degrees. By your brilliant initiative you have at once detected an error and it remains only to find out what to do with it. After furious computation you decide that the deviation is $+3$. But there is still an uneasy suspicion that it might equally be -3 . You find yourself repeating a little doggerel to the effect that *Deviation West, Compass Best, Deviation East, Compass Least*. The mere fact of remembering this cheers you up for a bit until you try to work out the implications. After a while you

decide to give the whole thing best and call it East. So you borrow a pencil from one of your assistants and make a note on your diagram.

The next step is to repeat the performance with the aircraft headed first on East and then on South. After South there is a pause, for it is at this stage that Co-efficient C has to be computed and corrected for. The formula here is *North minus South, the whole over two*, so you subtract the southerly deviation from the northerly, divide it as accurately as you can by two, and rack your brains to remember what to do with the result. You do not ask your assistants.

You realize now that you have not been as methodical as you hoped. You have, not to put too fine a point upon it, quite forgotten the corrector key. You therefore dispatch one of the airmen to the flight-office to fetch it. This affords half an hour's interlude for reflection and it is as well not to dwell too bitterly on the fact that the other members of the flight will now be eating up all the hot lunch.

When the man returns with the key you insert it in one of the holes provided and give it a vigorous turn. The compass needle turns a good sixty degrees so you give the key another twist in the opposite direction. After several minutes' struggling backwards and forwards you are satisfied that you have dealt finally with old man Co-efficient C, so you turn the aircraft on West and wave to your assistants to get busy again. When they have informed you of the result of their deliberations you go into another huddle with the corrector key and deal no less effectively with Co-efficient B than you did with his brother, *i.e.*, by trial and error.

From now on the game becomes pretty straightforward. You head the aircraft rapidly on all eight cardinal points in turn, note the deviations on each heading, add them all up and divide the result by eight. The answer is friend Co-efficient A, and luckily he is nearly always a tiny little fellow not worth correcting for. All you have to do now is to note the final deviations on a little card, sign it, date it, and affix it beside the compass, which can now be considered as swung in accordance with Air Publication 129. You notice *en passant* that the new deviations are just about as large as the old, but that is no business of yours. You have done your duty and have shortened the war by at least five minutes. Furthermore there is every hope that you will be in time to grab some tea.

So you leave instructions for the

repicketing of the aircraft and walk smartly back to the office. Proudly you tell the Flight-Commander that eighteen-O-eight has been swung.

He does not appear either as grateful or as impressed as you had hoped.

"I should say it has," he replies, "Aileron did it yesterday. I told you sixteen-O-six."

o o

Conservancy

THIS peculiar word, which occurs frequently in the last letter received from Sapper Sympton (now training at X), appears to mean the Saturday morning cleaning of Army Huts. In civil life Sympton lives by himself in a flat, and so, although a woman comes in and "does for him" two days a week, he has some slight acquaintance with such domestic appliances as brooms, dusters, mops, etc.

"When Saturday morning came," he writes, "I naturally felt that I should be in my element. Earlier in the week, struggling with rifles and bayonets, I had not, I must confess, shone. But give me a broom, I said to myself, and the other twenty-five inmates of the hut would stand back respectfully, and watch with envy the master-touch."

As Saturday approached, apparently, he began boasting in a quiet way about his prowess with the instruments of house-cleaning. All the Symptons have healthy imaginations, and he seems to have exaggerated both his experience and skill. On Friday evening Corporal Mustard, who is in charge of Sympton's hut, had to go on twenty-four hours' guard-duty.

"I think," he said to Sympton "that you had better take charge of the conservancy in the morning, as you seem, by your own account, to have been bred to that sort of thing from the cradle."

Sympton was flattered, but when Saturday morning came he found that the honour was not quite an unmixed blessing. Immediately after breakfast the other twenty-four men came up, one by one, and begged to be excused conservancy duty. One had a bad foot, another was wanted at the Company Office, four had been inoculated the night before, and the rest had pressing appointments with an assortment of corporals, sergeants, etc., most of whom Sympton suspected of being mythical. The last man said he was wanted by Lieutenant Harris, and

when Sympton asked who Lieutenant Harris was, replied that he was Mrs. Harris' brother. Sympton, though an ardent Dickensian, saw the point too late.

Left in lonely splendour with a large hut to clean, Sympton started bravely to wield an implement called a dry-scrubber, and after forty minutes found that he had made one twentieth of the floor-space look just twice as dirty as before.

He then started in with an ordinary broom, but apart from covering the twenty-six piles of bedding with a thick coat of dust, little was achieved.

Then he had an idea. Even after thirty years of ideas that went wrong Sympton still allows himself to get them. Vaguely he remembered reading at school about some fellow—with a name not unlike that Belgian detective chap—who had to clean out a garage or a stable or something, and did the job to the satisfaction of all concerned by diverting a river through it. There was no river handy, but Sympton had noticed a hose-pipe outside. He removed the twenty-six beds—as he thought—and then played on the room, through an open window, with the hose.

"After that," his letter concludes, "a good many things seemed to happen at once. Sergeants and corporals appeared in locust-drifts and I was told to peel potatoes for so many hours that I am sure the Ministry of Agriculture will be at its wits' end to produce the required vegetables. Somehow the room was dried out and the twenty-five beds replaced. Corporal Mustard's bedding, which I had left *in situ* and which was therefore soaking wet, I discreetly abstracted and placed on the roof. I forgot all about it until just before the corporal returned to the hut. There had been a hard frost, and his blankets were frozen into a solid ice-block, with his spare boots embedded in them like flies in amber. I often wonder where Corporal Mustard went to school. Some of his expressions are a little on the coarse side."

o o

"ALL BUS DRIVERS NOW RESERVED."
Commercial Motor.

But you should listen to some of the conductors.

o o

"Bulgaria has now definitely joined the Asses."—*Schoolgirl's Essay.*

We see nothing wrong in this statement.

Curiously Enough

WHEN I was a little bit of a nipper (said the waiter) I was in a train once and my feet got cold. I was travelling with a friend of my father's that used to manufacture gum, a Mr. Stickie it was, curiously enough, and I said to him "Mr. Stickie," I said, "my feet aren't half cold." But he didn't pay no attention, being I suppose he was pondering about gum. But a man was there sitting opposite with his wife, curiously enough, and he said "Rattle your feet on the floor, sonny," he said, "look at me, I been doing it all the time since we started," he said. I remember what he was like to this minute, his moustache looked just like it was false, and his wife was wearing a hat she might have got out of a cracker.

Then he spun me a long yarn about it being a law that you couldn't get any more out of a machine than you put into it. "It's a law," he said. "Like the bicycle," he said. "You can never be properly warm in a train," he said, "without you use as much energy as what you'd use walking the same distance," he said.

So I began to rattle my feet for a bit. A proper row we kicked up between us, I can tell you. After a time a big stout gentleman in the far corner with a check coat on that hadn't been paying no attention said to Mr. Stickie, "Excuse me," he said, "has your little boy got some nervous affliction, because if so," he said, "I got a remarkable mixture that'll soon put that right," and he pulled out a huge great bottle from the inside of his coat and held it up.

So Mr. Stickie got proper annoyed, curiously enough. "I'll trouble you to keep your personal remarks to yourself," said Mr. Stickie, sharp. I can see his eyebrows now: they used to blow about in the wind, straight they did. Proper annoyed he was. But the gent opposite, he got

even more worked up. He bent forward and turned sideways in front of his wife and he said "Con—found it Sir," he said, "do you realize your remarks reflect upon me?" he said. He was still rattling away with his feet on the floor, and so was I, kicking up a proper tumult.

Well, the old gent in the far corner got a bit dismayed, like, and he said "No offence," he said, "I'm sure," he said. Then he took a look at the other feller's feet and he said "I see you're doing it too; now I have here in this bottle—" and at that the other feller got so annoyed he'd have burst out with something only his wife touched him on the arm restraining-like.

Well, then I said to Mr. Stickie, "Mr. Stickie," I said, "what's in that gentleman's bottle?"—an inquiring mind I had, even then: I was always one to want to find out about things. A few years after I started this job I collected statistics about the number of people that when they first took the mustard-spoon out of the pot they found they'd got it the wrong way round—I mean the back of the spoon upwards. Ninety-seven per cent. it was, curiously enough.

So anyway Mr. Stickie said "I dunno what's in the gentleman's bottle, probably some patent medicine, but how many more times have I got to tell you to pronounce the 'h' in 'what'?" he said—he talked refined, Mr. Stickie: he had the face for it. I said how did he want me to pronounce it? and of course he said *hual* like they all do. So I said "But Mr. Stickie," I said, "that's pronouncing the 'h' out of 'what,'" but he wouldn't admit it.

Then the gent opposite said "Well, sonny," he said, "are your feet still cold?" So I said "No," I said, "but I seem to be getting a mite tired," I said.

Then the old gent in the far corner spoke up again and said "Maybe what the boy needs is a tonic," and he reached into his coat again and pulled out his bottle and said "Now I have here—" So Mr. Stickie interrupted and said "If you tell me that stuff is a tonic as well as a sedative you're a liar," and the old gent was proper annoyed and said "I won't have my preparation insulted, established 1863," he said, "there's such a thing as the law of slander," he said. "If you can do better," he said, "you do it, I don't think."

So Mr. Stickie had a bottle of his gum on him, curiously enough, and he pulled it out without showing the label and he said "This stuff of mine'll beat yours any day," he said, and he pulled out the cork and held the bottle out to me and said "There, take a swig and show the gentleman it's quick-acting," he said.

Well I didn't want to take a swig of no gum, but I put it up to my mouth and pretended to, and that's what reminded me of all this, curiously enough, you having sole. The sauce with that sole smelt to me just like that gum. Did it taste like gum? . . . Ah.

Oh, did you want the bill? I been wondering if you did, curiously enough (said the waiter).

R. M.



Soldier's Thought

IF I had now, in cash instead of debts, The cost of last year's beer and cigarettes, I'd spend it all on cigarettes and beer To keep me happy for another year.



"Private Higgs"—



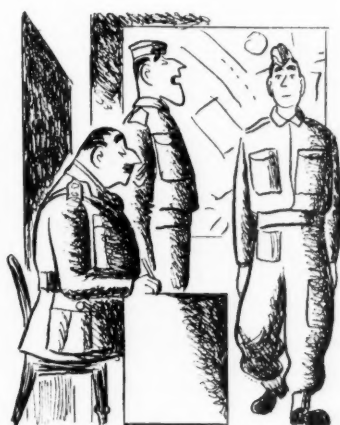
"Private Higgs, atten—shun!"



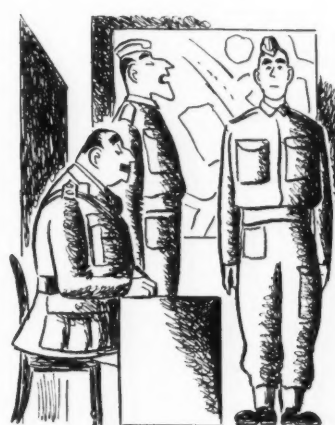
"Private Higgs, quick march!"



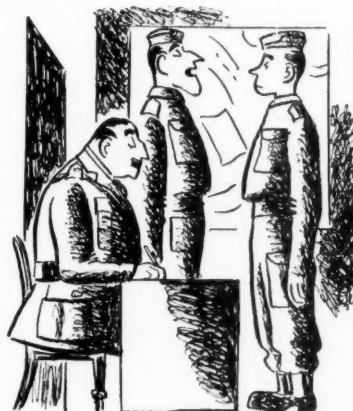
"Private Higgs, right turn!"



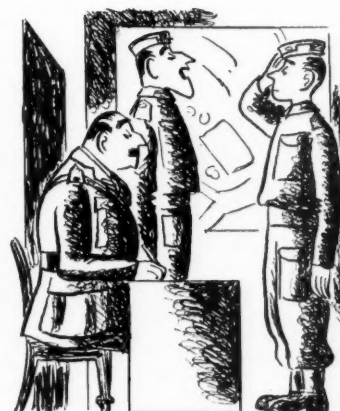
"Private Higgs, mark time!"



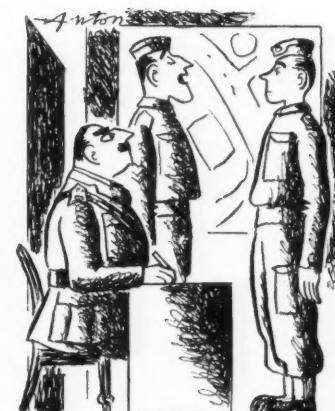
"Private Higgs, halt!"



"Private Higgs, right turn!"



"Private Higgs, salute!"



"Private Higgs, Sir."



"I wonder; can it be the one from Number 44?"

Sleeping Mixture

WHEN you're in bed to-night think not of wars,

But rather of the Panda fast asleep,
Her piebald head cushioned on woolly paws;
Or think of velvet mice that warmly creep

Into their holes to curl up round and soft.

Transfer your thoughts from bellicose affairs;
Though it be true the bombers fly aloft,
Try to reflect on little furry bears,

Slow drowsy summer sounds, the buzz of bees,

A motor mower on some distant lawn,
Or pigeons cooing quietly in the trees.

Ponder on dogs that sprawl about and yawn

In front of fires; or kettles hotly purring;

Or gentle waves lapping a sandy bay.
Dwell not upon the form of Marshal Goering,
Let not his image turn your night to day,

But think of things as round but more endearing—

A puff-ball, or a large recumbent sheep,
Or stately, solemn, lazy clouds appearing

To wrap you in an eiderdown of sleep. V. G.

A Soldier's Revenge

THAT Sergeant Stingworth was no ordinary sergeant had been obvious to me from the very first day I joined his squad. His colossal stature, the unusual redness of his neck, the ferocity of his moustache, and his voice, which resembled that of an infuriated bloodhound, were alike calculated to command respect and even superstitious awe. His boots and buttons shone with a supernatural light. Even the other sergeants were terrified of him. On the parade ground he would frequently order his own squad to march straight through any other squads which happened to be in the way, scattering the men like chaff before the wind, and no one ventured to utter a word of complaint.

If Sergeant Stingworth was an unusual sergeant, I was from some points of view perhaps an unusual sort of soldier. In civilian life a designer of labels for cigar boxes (and not altogether an unsuccessful one), I found it more difficult than most men to adapt myself to the military calling. Even during rifle drill, when I knew that the slightest slip would expose me to the cruellest sarcasms, my thoughts often wandered. I would find myself thinking, for instance, of allegorical figures draped in white mantles, seated on globes and surrounded by anchors, sextants, horns of plenty, barrels of wine, theodolites and sheets of music. The odour of a fine Corona seemed to drift into my nostrils.

Then with a start I would awake to reality. I was on the parade ground, and once again I found that I was holding my rifle upside-down on the wrong shoulder. Sergeant Stingworth had come close up to me and was peering into my face. There was a moment's awful pause before he began to speak, if indeed that fearful sound that made all the windows rattle and caused the Colonel to poke his head, with one eyebrow raised, out of the Mess could be called speaking. That night I was on fatigues again. As I sat in pitch darkness, scraping lumps of coal with a spoon, I had a hopeless longing for revenge.

Sergeant Stingworth believed that cruelty was the best form of discipline. After a fifty-mile route march he would double his men round the barrack square until they were dizzy and then march them into the officers' quarters, where they collapsed. They would then be court-martialled and confined to barracks for two months. On one occasion he ordered us to polish our blankets for kit-inspection, and when this proved impossible we were severely punished. So it went on. Hatred smouldered in my heart like a cigar. Was there no way of revenge? Had the sergeant no guilty secret which I might hope to unmask?

Matters came to a head one morning on rifle drill, when through some technical fault I happened to get my rifle between the legs of the man in front of me. He fell over, and in doing so thrust his own rifle into Sergeant Stingworth's chest. Stingworth seized it in his teeth and bit a large piece out of it.

The whole squad was on fatigues that evening, and I myself was ordered to report at the guard-room every ten minutes throughout the night. Next morning, not unnaturally, I fell asleep on parade and was confined to barracks for five years.

The sheer wanton injustice filled me with indignation. I no longer cared what happened. I must be revenged. That night I could have been seen creeping towards the sergeant's quarters with my knife, fork and spoon in my hand. I meant to find Sergeant Stingworth, and when I had found him I meant to kill him.



"That's funny—that's the third customer who's never mentioned the invasion."

I reached Stingworth's room and paused for a moment outside his door, nerving myself for a supreme effort. I was puzzled by a sound which seemed to be coming from the room—a sound of faint music. Were my overwrought nerves playing tricks on me? Suddenly I opened the door. Next moment I nearly fainted with astonishment. Sergeant Stingworth, dressed in a Chinese silk dressing-gown, was playing the harpsichord to himself very softly, his eyes half closed. He whipped round, closed the instrument with a bang, and made a frenzied attempt to thrust a framed Beardsley etching and a copy of Baudelaire's poems under his bed. He was too late. I had seen enough. Sergeant Stingworth *had* a guilty secret. He was an aesthete. The chrysanthemums on the table, the Japanese sword on the wall, the reproduction of Van Gogh's "Sunflowers" told their own tale. The man was a living lie. And now that I knew all I had him in my power.

"What the devil do you want?" he asked weakly, avoiding my eye.

I smiled. "I just thought I'd come and see how you were getting on, Stingworth," I said.

For a moment he turned purple. Then he smiled wanly and held out his hand. I did not take it.

"You won't tell anyone?" he whispered hoarsely. "If this got to the Colonel's ears I should be finished. Please, please . . ." He was almost weeping.

"Very well, Stingworth, we shall have to see," I said slowly. And with a bow and a meaning look I was gone.

Next morning I was half an hour late on parade. Stingworth opened his mouth to curse, but the words were strangled in his throat. I had merely raised one eyebrow. It was enough. Next day I appeared on parade wearing blue glasses and smoking a cigarette in a long green holder. Stingworth said nothing. After a fortnight of this sort of thing Stingworth's face began to change. It became furtive and haunted. His military gait changed to a dismal shuffle. His boots became green.

But it was obvious that things could not go on like this for ever. One of us must give in. One day I appeared on parade carrying only the bolt of my rifle. Later, while executing "Saluting on the March," I produced a paper bag, blew it up and burst it with a loud bang. Stingworth lost his head. Before he knew what he was doing he had put me under arrest.

"Very well, Stingworth," I said very quietly. "On your own head be it."

As soon as I was released I wrote to the Colonel telling him the whole story. I had not long to wait. A day or two later, as it happened, there was an officers' dinner. Oxford memories, exchanged over the port, no doubt set the tone of the evening. After dinner a mob of junior officers rushed towards Stingworth's room. In ten minutes his harpsichord, his first editions, his pictures, were heaped in the centre of the parade ground and set on fire. Stingworth himself, his face covered with blanco, stood by wringing his hands.

Next day he was court-martialled and reduced to the ranks. As I was responsible for his detection, it was decided that I should become sergeant in his place. As I strolled up and down the parade ground that evening, arm-in-arm with the Colonel, I felt that Fate had at last relented.

"And by the way, Pinwright," said the Colonel, playfully stitching a fourth stripe on my arm, "you needn't attend any parades unless you want to, you know. I want you to feel that this barracks is your home."

"Colonel," I said simply, "I will."

Action and Inaction

THEY did a sweep
Over the English Channel,
Painting a page of history,
but I,
Feeling dirt cheap,
Wrapped up in flu and flannel,
Could only watch their brush-
marks in the sky.

"On the fourth day the infantry advanced towards the hill-
ankle deep in mud and often moving backwards owing to the
thickness of the scrub."—*Daily Paper*.

Very confusing for the enemy.





"No. 17 Verbena Road? Turn left just the other side of a blue light over a front door, then left again opposite a long yellow streak, then turn right between a bright glow above some curtains and a white gleam from a basement, and No. 17 is the third really bad light from this end."

Gas

YES, yes, old boy, but what about the *gas*?
 You are prepared for anything, you say.
 Where is your respirator, then, you ass?
 Are you quite ready for the mustard spray?

What will you wear, I wonder, when the swine
 Rain on the town their blisters, chokes and tears?
 I have a notion you will snaffle mine,
 Which I have carried round with me for years.

I have spent hours in this absurd attire,
 And got an anchor up, and climbed a wall,
 Signalled in semaphore, put out a fire—
 But you can scarcely get it on at all!

George, like yourself, is ready for the Spring,
 He took his gas-mask out the other day,
 To find that birds had nested in the thing
 And rats had nibbled bits of it away.

I took a "course" about two years ago,
 And, if I must be absolutely frank,

I have forgotten almost all I know;
 But your old brain has *always* been a blank.

If you should see a dark-brown oily spot
 Upon the cheek of some beloved aunt,
 Would this be lachrymatory—or what,
 And can you say what happens next? You can't!

A mustard blister is distressing too;
 Likewise a blister caused by Lewisite.
 What is the difference between the two?
 You haven't got the faintest notion? Quite.

Well, one is oval and the other round,
 And one you ought to prick, the other not.
 For too much arsenic in A is found,
 While B is just a rather jolly blot.

But which is which I shall not now explain.
 You would be ready if the worst occurred,
 The worst malignance of a madman's brain.
 On one so fortunate why waste a word? A. P. H.



“HONEST JOE”

“If only I dared——”



Mr. PUNCH'S HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND

(Registered under the War Charities Act, 1940)

THIS Fund, which was originally started in order to purchase supplies of raw material and distribute them to Voluntary Working Parties for the Hospitals, has already sent out a very large quantity of Knitting Wool, Unbleached Calico and Veltex, as well as many other materials of all varieties, to be made up into comforts for the wounded.

The number of casualties now caused by the indiscriminate bombing of London and our other great cities has made it necessary to extend the operation of our Fund to the provision of medical and surgical supplies for civilian hospitals.

At the same time there remains a constant demand on behalf of all the Services—especially amongst the men whose duty lies in exposed situations—for Balaclava helmets, gloves, mittens, woollen waistcoats, and the like.

Mr. Punch, in expressing his very sincere gratitude for the generous help already given by subscribers, renews therefore his appeal both for the sake of the Fighting Services and of civilians who have suffered from the ruthless barbarity of the enemy, in the hope that plenty of supplies may be available for all.

Though we know well that these are days of great financial difficulty, we yet ask you, those who can, to send some donation, large or small, according to your means, to PUNCH HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Tuesday, March 4th.—House of Lords: The War Damage Bill continues its journey.

House of Commons: House of Commons (Disqualification) Bill, Committee and Third Reading; Some Important Announcements.

Wednesday, March 5th.—House of Commons: Naval Estimates—An Old Hand Makes a Maiden Speech.

Thursday, March 6th.—House of Commons: Army Estimates—An Older Hand Makes a Maiden Speech.

Tuesday, March 4th.—It is a matter of history that many of the greatest discoveries have eluded their would-be discoverers just when the final touch appeared about to be added.

Members of the House of Commons must have sympathized with that feeling when, trembling on the edge of the solution of one of war-time life's greatest mysteries, they found the book of knowledge snatched from their sight. This is how it happened.

Major GWILYM LLOYD GEORGE, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food, was being asked by Sir

his ornate Chair, leaned forward. After the "eternity" of the popular novel, the Minister spoke:

"If the Hon. Member buys one, he will find out!"

It was of course, what Mr. CHURCHILL used to call a terminological inexactitude of the first order. Even Sir HERBERT's analytical mind is incapable of the feat. The House sat back disappointed. It was as though the curtain had descended on the mystery thriller just when the detective was about to explain to an obtuse Watson how it was all done.

Mr. ROBERT MORRISON, with simple faith, wanted to know why, the price of meat not having risen, sausages should cost more. Major LLOYD GEORGE was tactfully non-committal. Perhaps he did not like to explain that meat was (more or less) an abstract or hypothetical question in talking of war-time sausages.

It was also announced that only homing pigeons On His Majesty's Service—five per cent. of the total, it was said—are to be allowed rations. For the others, it is a case of scrambling for what there is, and the cat take the hindmost.

Mr. HERBERT MORRISON, Home Secretary, read out the Government's decision to put the clock on a second hour from May 3rd to August 9th, so as to take full advantage of the light to make munitions of war. Half the House cheered, the other half shouted its dissent. Mrs. MAVIS TATE leapt to her feet with a demand to know whether the Minister realized the "horror" with which his decision would be received by all those who had to produce our foodstuffs.

The Minister did not seem contrite enough, and so Mrs. TATE said she would raise a debate later. She did, declaring in effect that this second hour might make all the difference between victory and defeat. Mr. MORRISON showed himself even more intransigent than before, and replied that, while they were "playing about with the clock" they might as well go two whole hogs as one and get the advantage of as much overtime as possible in the war factories.

Mrs. TATE looked unconvinced, murmured that the cows simply would never consent to have their time-table upset, and relapsed into dissatisfied silence.

Mr. OLIVER LYTTTELTON, President of the Board of Trade, told a startled House that it was proposed to close down many factories that were making non-essentials, so as to release workers and factory space for the all-consuming war effort.

Everybody would have to do with less. The Government would try to ensure that those manufacturers who were forced out of business by the war would get back into the markets when peace came again. Meanwhile, they must regard their elimination as their contribution to victory, and their losses as the inevitable price of war.



THE PRUNER

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE

Mr. LYTTTELTON's statement was a long one, and he dropped his voice so far at the end of every passage that many Members leaped to their feet each time to ask questions. The leaps caused amusement and so exhausted the performers that when the statement did end the Minister had comparatively few supplementary questions to answer.

Sir FRANK SANDERSON was squeezed out of the queue of querists, and mildly protested to the SPEAKER that "it was in the public interest that he should ask his question." Mr. SPEAKER showing no signs of thus serving the best interests of the nation, Sir FRANK, to clinch the matter, added that his "statement was in favour of the Government." This produced no result except what is known as "early laughter," which became even earlier when witty Mr. JOHN MCGOVERN was heard to remark: "No flowers, by request."

There were certainly few flowers for the Government to-day.

Mr. GEOFFREY MANDER, aggressive Liberal, appeared in a new rôle—that of the timid applicant for favour. He



NURSE ATTLEE CARRIES THE BABY.

[The House of Commons Disqualification (Temporary Provisions) Bill passed its final stages.]

HERBERT WILLIAMS (a fellow of infinite curiosity) what was in a "Class C Sausage." Members strained their ears for the expected revelation. The Major rose slowly, thoughtfully, looking at a typewritten document in his hand. Even Mr. SPEAKER, aloof in



"I reckon they're finished—they did that more'n four months ago and ain't bin near us since."

wanted an alteration in the House of Commons (Disqualification) Bill, to end the Government appointments of M.P.s at the expiry of a year, subject to special renewal. Never did a mover show less enthusiasm for a proposal. He offered to kill it as soon as the Herod of the Front Bench (who happened at that moment to be the gentle-voiced Sir DONALD SOMERVELL, the Attorney-General) said the fateful word.

Running true to form, Sir DONALD Herod said the fateful word. But Sir IRVING ALBERY was not willing to be a party to this new Slaughter of the Innocents, and said that if Mr. MANDER did not show more enthusiasm for his offspring, he (Sir IRVING) would fish the poor little thing out of the bullrushes and adopt it himself.

Mr. MANDER still showed no signs of parental pride. Mr. ANEURIN BEVAN (who is rapidly joining the ranks of our most polished Parliamentarians) added his rebuke of so unnatural a father, but Mr. MANDER, grinning good-humouredly, made it plain that, whoever kept the brat, he would not.

He positively flung it on to Sir IRVING's doorstep, and that Hon. Member, with the aid of some 37 other Members, carried it, screaming, through the Division Lobby. But hard-hearted Herod, folding his arms in the best melodramatic style, summoned 135 henchmen, so the Bill went through unaltered and Mr. MANDER's bairn died the death.

The faithless parent sat unconcerned on the Liberal benches; he was not among the gallant 37 who fought for his child. He looked at the Attorney as if to say: "Thou canst not shake thy gory locks at me—I never done it!"

Third Reading of the Bill produced an unexpectedly vehement speech from Mr. EDGAR GRANVILLE, complaining that government seemed to be a job reserved for the aged, while youth stood, neglected and disconsolate, on the mat outside. Men who had held high office for ten years, said he, must be stale and tired. There was too much of the Magic Circle and the Front Bench Club, and it was time the country had some new blood.

Members, at first inclined to scoff,

were silenced by the evident sincerity of a young man who fought with the Anzacs at Gallipoli at the age of 16 and has been invalided out of the Army in this war.

Some wag chipped in with the reminder that the PRIME MINISTER is 67, but Mr. GRANVILLE retorted that youth was not solely a matter of years.

Mr. SEYMOUR COCKS allowed himself a bitter attack on Mr. MALCOLM MACDONALD, whose appointment to the British High Commissionership in Canada is the immediate cause of the Bill. It was all very brilliant and ironic, and was spoiled only by the mislaying of a sheet of notes, which dried up the flow of spontaneous wit for a time.

However, the Bill got its Third Reading and went to the Upper House, where, at the behest of Lord SIMON, their Lordships were struggling manfully with the War Damage Bill.

It is said that not one of the several score clauses in that measure was grammatical as it left the Commons after its severe (if somewhat piecemeal)

amendment, so the well-known polish of noble Lords will be useful.

Wednesday, March 5th.—Mr. ROBERT CARY did a good turn to sixteen naval officers-to-be and a young lieutenant by conveying them into the public gallery to hear Mr. A. V. ALEXANDER make his maiden speech as First Lord of the Admiralty in presenting the Naval Estimates.

It was a proud brave story the First Lord had to tell of the war-time activities of the British Navy—a story to send a thrill through the least imaginative. The vote was for £100, a mere token. But the Navy, as Mr. A. V. ALEXANDER was quick to point out, is no token navy, nor are the ships phantoms.

He was asking for more ships, more men, more supplies for the vast business that is the modern British Navy. The rival organization, the Italian Navy, had been forced out of business in the Mediterranean. The German Navy had never been in business, although it claimed to have sunk many more ships than we possessed.

And new building this year will make a formidable force, ready, aye ready, for come what may.

Not all the Navy's work is spectacular, and the First Lord paid loudly-cheered tribute to the unseen engineers, stokers and dockyard workers on whose skill and devotion so very, very much may depend in time of stress.

Mr. ALEXANDER warned us that we must expect grave attacks, grievous blows. But we shall win through to the victory which is the single-minded aim of the British Navy and nation.

And so to a debate full of praise for the brave men who keep our shores.

Mr. BRACEWELL SMITH, Chairman of the Kitchen Committee, ought to be a Minister. He actually—against all tradition—speaks so that he can be heard. We heard him turn down a suggestion from Mr. W. W. WAKEFIELD ("WAKERS" of the Rugby football-field) for a help-yourself restaurant in the House. Mr. BRACEWELL SMITH plainly implied that one so nimble and adept at getting things for himself as the intrepid "WAKERS" might find the scheme work, but others (shall we say?) less adroit might slowly starve to death.

He promised, however, to consider the matter again if there were "developments" in the situation. Mr. THORNE asked hopefully whether the help-yourself would include liquids, but the wily Kitchen Chairman, who knows a thing or two about running hotels, said No. There were difficulties, he blandly explained, in dealing so with liquids.

One of course is who says "When!"—and when.

Thursday, March 6th.—There was another distinguished maiden speech to-day—Captain DAVID MARGESSON, Secretary for War, introducing the Army Estimates. He started off in the traditional way by "craving the indulgence of the House for a maiden speaker," having held the silent office of Whip for most of his nineteen years in the House.

"Be to my faults a little blind," he pleaded. But he needed no indulgence nor kindly blindness, for it was an

excellent—if over-long—speech. It was a careful story of the great British Army, its triumphs, its pitfalls, its joys and sorrows. Like the story of the Navy, a fine, brave, thrilling account with everybody freshly remembered in the flowing cups of praise.

Mr. R. A. BUTLER, the Foreign Under-Secretary, announced that we had broken off diplomatic relations with Bulgaria, and added amid cheers that the Government had no doubt that the Bulgarian Government would live to regret the decision to allow Germany to overrun its country.



"Lost your roof, I see."

"Oh, no—that's it in the garden three doors up."

Times Aren't What They Were.

ONCE upon quite another time there lived a little girl called Little Red Riding Hood. She was called this, as you may have guessed, because she wore a red hood and all the other evacuees happened to have blue or green or striped ones. None of them rode anything, anyway, so it didn't matter which of them was called "Riding." It just happened to be her.

Well, this Little Red Riding Hood person had been evacuated to a cottage not far from the place in the country where her grandmother lived. The grandmother had got out of having any evacuees owing to her age—which she was always a bit apt to exaggerate, as people do when getting on for ninety—and being bedridden.

One day the person on whom Little Red Riding Hood was billeted told her to pop along through the wood and no nonsense, and go and see her granny and keep out of the way for a bit because washing-day was something chronic with a parcel of children under foot and this 'ere Helper wanting to do out her own fancy undies at the same time.

As she said this, which she did more than once, she gave Little Red Riding Hood a string bag containing her rations of butter, margarine, and bacon. And she told her to hop it, and Little Red Riding Hood hopped it, hood and all.

There were some quite pretty flowers growing in the rather nice wood, but Little Red Riding Hood paid no attention to them, being fairly sick of all the Nature Notes that had been crammed down her throat at school, and the rambles that she and her evacuated friends were for ever being taken on, and the way you couldn't even switch on the wireless without it was to hear some poor blight burling on about field-mice or elephants or what-not.

So she walked along, carrying these blessed rations and thinking it was just as well she hadn't been given jellied eels and a nice tin o' salmon or there wouldn't have been much left of them by the time she reached the old lady's.

All of a sudden an animal rather like a wolf came out from behind a tree, and the first reaction of Little Red Riding Hood was one of pure annoyance at the way one simply could *not* get away from this Natural History business in the country. She was fed to the teeth with having to notice things all the

time—though a wolf was a sight better than those rotten little birds, being a good deal easier to see.

It also, as it turned out, was easier to hear, and when it said "Heyday," or "Good-morrow," or some slogan of that kind, Red Riding Hood got it in one, practically, and asked if it was a new film or just The Three Little Pigs one.

After that they walked along together for a bit, till they came to where the path divided, and Red Riding Hood said "Good-bai."

Her grandmother's electric bell was out of order owing to Uncle Ernie having been called up and not being there to mend it, but she called out and told Red Riding Hood to come on in and stop fidgeting.

The old lady was in bed and looked like nothing you ever saw, so that it gave Red Riding Hood quite a turn and she passed the remark.

In fact she passed several, about her grandmother's eyes and hands and

teeth, and the grandmother, though she had her answers ready, muttered something about the way children nowadays weren't brought up to mind their manners. And Red Riding Hood explained that our mum didn't want no repressions and complexes and all like that in *our* family, thank you.

But grandmother, far from standing for that, declared that *she'd* give you complexes all right, and lifted her hand—which, as Red Riding Hood told her, could easily render her liable to be took up by the police for assault. So then grandmother started creating.

And when it came to language, a passing Home Guard heard the pair of them and put his head in at the window and was just in time to see the old lady fastening her teeth into Little Red Riding Hood.

The Home Guard thought: Well, I suppose this is the invasion or something and it's all right to shoot, and he did shoot, and although the shot didn't hit a thing it made a good deal of noise and sounded as much like a bomb as anything. And Little Red Riding Hood skipped for the stirrup-pump and the grandmother said: Under the bed for me, and dived for it.

The result of this was that the Home Guard saw more than he was meant to see, and recognized the wolf, disguised in a gas-mask so as to look like somebody's grandmother.

Of all the Fifth Column tricks, said the Home Guard, frightfully disgusted, and sent a couple more shots through the window just for luck.

Then he walked Red Riding Hood back to her billet again and promised to look round for the real grandmother, and Red Riding Hood said Try the picture-houses, if there are any in this one-horse burg.

Still, they enjoyed the walk and when they parted the Home Guard said: Saturday, same time, same place?

And Red Riding Hood said: Okay.
E. M. D.

Who Goes Home?

"Dumbartonshire By-Election.
Eve of Poll.

Tenants' Hall, Levenvale, 8 p.m.

8.0 Chairman's Remarks.

8.5 Bailie A. McKinlay, Candidate.

3.20 Mr. A. B. McKay."

Glasgow Paper.





UNRECORDED HISTORY

Cincinnatus claims exemption from dictatorship on the grounds of being employed on work of national importance.

At the Revue

"APPLESAUCE" (PALLADIUM)

MISS FLORENCE DESMOND and Mr. MAX MILLER are the two chief attractions at the Palladium. Others of course are lavishly on parade, and the ladies of the entertainment, by name The Twenty-Four Saucelets, are by no means backward in coming forward. They do not permit a mere orchestra to stand (or sit) between them and us, but walk the joy-plank in the front of the stalls in order more thoroughly to establish neighbourly relations. Moreover there is abundance of dancing, not to mention the elegant elasticity of Miss BETTINA RICHMAN, who, amid Hawaiian hula-hula, practises the arts of contortion with an air of cool and almost intellectual aloofness, as though she could write an essay on Plato with her legs tucked behind her neck. No less masterly in poise but owning a gust of passion as well are the members of the DAMORA BALLET, whose expert and furious can-can fully justifies the proud suggestion of complete ability made by the title of that dance.

Then there is Mr. JACK STANFORD, who claims to be "The Dancing Fool." One likes this renewal of clownship's

Tudor name, though it may not have been consciously employed. There were dancing fools aforetime, notably SHAKESPEARE's clown *Kempe*, who was early engaged in the business now always known as Marathon, jiggling it all the way from London to Norwich with the lunatic energy of a modern "jitter-bug." Mr. STANFORD has the right nonsensical athleticism and can unquenchably make quips with his feet.

For vocalists we have Miss JEAN CARR, who is gay and dashing, and Miss VERA LYNN who prefers the melting mood and applies herself triumphantly, by way of a microphone, to the great heart of the people. To hear her sing:

"Then the angels up above
Wrote the sweetest song of love
And gave us the First Lullaby"
is surely to enjoy theology, as well as musical history, without tears. In the shops outside, cream may be absent and sugar may be rationed, but Miss LYNN, most truthfully announced as "Radio's Sweet Singer of Sweet Songs," is certainly doing her best to help Lord WOOLTON out.

So we return to our first principals, namely Miss FLORENCE DESMOND and Mr. MAX MILLER. Is there anything more to be said of that infallible mimic

and satirist, Miss DESMOND? She now invades the gorgeous East and the French stage for her victims and, whether she is being the almond-eyed sultana of the one or the plumed and frisky comedienne of the other, the victory is wholly hers. Mr. MAX MILLER intervenes most engagingly throughout the show, and he too is consistently a conqueror.

His particular skill is to portray always a brassy kind of bounder and yet to persuade us that the face of brass has a heart of gold.

The MAX MILLER "card" is a lout and yet likeable; he smirks (and what word has more horrible suggestion?), and yet somehow makes that process as nice as if he merely smiled. He shows us a vulgarian on the grand scale but so affable in his manner and so neat in his jesting that one not only puts up with anything and any noise (even the scream of urchin laughter), but even begins to want more and more of this naughty boy in man's estate. Nor is that wish disappointed. *Applesauce*, when all allowance has been made for the contributory skill of other "stars" and for the dazzling presence of two dozen of Saucelets, is "a MAX MILLER Show." He can make it and the public undoubtedly will take it. I. B.



"One of us really should be sort of senior fire-watcher. Shall we toss or something?"

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

The Peace-Maker

VISCOUNT CECIL presents himself to millions of admiring adherents who know him better as Lord ROBERT, in what is surely the most retiring autobiography on record. The tale of his early years does certainly occupy his first six pages or so, but thereafter his movements appear only in an occasional travel note, his achievements in little more than side comments on published documents, or perhaps more typically in explanatory references to draft memoranda never quite taken to heart by the Government of the day. His book—*A Great Experiment, An Autobiography* (CAPE, 16/-)—is, as one might expect, a very complete account of the League of Nations, its inception, its ten years of progress to immense authority, its invaluable work on reform of grave abuses, its relative collapse when faced by great States bent on aggression, and the changes in its future structure that must be considered. The causes of the breakdown are tracked from Manchuria to Abyssinia, from Austria to Czechoslovakia, the one fatal failure to insist on the observance of international contract anywhere and at any cost revealing itself in every major incident. Here is an infinity of detail for the student, but more satisfyingly the authority of one who speaks with authority for hope of genuine world peace somewhere in the future.

Speaking to the Cook

To have your script "well vetted by the Ministry of Food . . . about the vexed question of vitamins and so on"

would cramp any cook's style; and it is not surprising that Mr. AMBROSE HEATH's broadcasts of June to December, 1940, are hardly up to his usual exhilarating level. *Kitchen Front Recipes and Hints* (A. AND C. BLACK, 2/6) would have been, one feels, a more serviceable book if it had reflected the legitimate grouses of the public as well as the rather unimaginative paternalism of the Government. But except for a well-deserved jibe at the cost of fish, Mr. HEATH trots quietly enough between the traces. His most interesting suggestions are those for preserving peas and tomatoes. But a few excellent regional dishes show what he might have done if he had built on traditional foundations. It is, after all, the needier country households who have the art of making a very little meat, a good deal of flour and a great many vegetables go a long way. Mr. HEATH might usefully survey the Women's Institute Cookery Books—Cornwall and Shropshire issue two of the best. His "Sussex Blanket"—a sound dish—has a more savoury variant in West Oxfordshire.

Grim but not Gay

No doubt Miss VERA BRITAIN has set down her opinions quite sincerely in *England's Hour* (MACMILLAN, 8/6), which is described by her publishers as "a contemporary picture of civilian England" in war-time. She feels deeply (possibly more deeply than she can think), has seen the damage in London, sent her own children to Canada, worked at the Children's Overseas Reception Board, visited the country, and saddened herself by remembering frequently that she is one of the "lost generation" caught in two wars. She is not alone over that; but is it so "lost"? The facts of the book will be useful as a record in later years, but its manner is disheartening. She writes "... these virtues [gallantry and endurance] have been commandeered under false pretences; they are vainly sacrificed on the altar of a creed which maintains there is no higher authority than the State," and "a few of us believe that . . . we must endeavour to keep alive the peace-time values of charity, truth and compassion." Not very complimentary to the majority, is it? Not very heartening to those who have offered their gallantry and endurance as a safeguard against hatred, lies and brutality?



"Hind leg of a donkey—and burry!"



DEEDS THAT OUGHT TO WIN THE V.C.

THE SUB-LIEUTENANT TAKES THE ADMIRAL'S QUEEN.

H. M. Bateman, March 13th, 1918

His Lordship Goes Down.

Miss NGAIO MARSH writes a detective novel which is so good as a novel that one has a sneaking wish that once in a while she would forget about detection and let herself go on the straight piece of fiction for which she is so unusually well equipped. Her strongest card is dialogue. In *Surfeit of Lampreys* (CRIME CLUB, 8/6) her picture of the charming irresponsibility of a bankrupt upper-class family makes a far more lasting impression than anything off this shelf has any right to do; and it is largely made up of talk—talk peculiarly English and not at all easy to write, so admirably put together that when the theatre comes to life again after HITLER's funeral it will be surprising if Miss MARSH does not make a new name for herself. Lord Wutherwood dies untidily in a lift, and expert readers will find it hard to pick out from a large field the public benefactor who thus rid *Debrett* of one of its less happy pages. To line 18 of page 278, Miss MARSH is indulgently referred for a small but vital error in her time-scheme.

"Faith Unfaithful"

In *Immortal Ease* (GOLLANCZ, 9/-) Miss KATHLEEN COYLE has written the biography and vindication of an imaginary poetess, *Victoria Rising*, who was considered cold-hearted by her acquaintances because, shortly after the birth of her son, she deserted him and her husband, married (presently) another American, left him to visit Europe, and never returned because of her love for a man she had known since childhood. Certainly, even to readers who are allowed to watch the untidy workings of her mind and heart and to read her second husband's tribute—"You would think the gods had fashioned her as an experience. She was too perfect"—she seems in need of vindication. It is a strange book full of curious people—the female-Lancelot of a heroine, a hero whose fame and fervour remind us of T. E. LAWRENCE, a rebellious Irishman, some wild women and some meek men. It deserves to be read "as an experience" and for the sake of some really beautiful passages which contain certain spiritual truths. But man is not "the only animal that destroys its kind."



"Oh, you people are all right. But it's not much fun standing here on the alert for two hours holding these buckets."

Home Guard Goings-On

The Night's Play

IN the late evening, when all good civilians are in their beds and at least one good sentry is out of his, ready to join combat with the first bush that uproots itself and advances across the silent heath, the rest of our Section lightly turns to thoughts of recreation.

Those who have so often shaken compassionate heads as they accompanied us in spirit through the humiliations of discipline, the hazards

of night manoeuvres and the anxieties of Sunday parades, will be relieved to know this; from time to time they must have feared that so much work and so little play must ultimately turn us into a set of dull boys, but now, with this revelation, they may rest easy in their minds after all.

Our Section Leader has a certain psychological insight. He knows how much we can stand without the shadow of revolt rearing its ugly head; and it

is he himself who marks the beginning of playtime. Sweeping the instruction-books from our table he will suddenly slap in their place two packs of playing-cards whose backs display, in addition to many sets of fingerprints in gun-oil, the portrait of a wary-looking antelope and a ringing tribute to Messrs. Hurdle, Coke and Friskney's beers and stouts.

The effect of this is as of a cloud lifted or an All-clear sounded. The practice messages we have been writing to one another (usually of identical and alarming purport) are screwed up and cast aside; the large-scale maps which we have been studying with knitted brows are instantly hung over little Mr. King's chair to protect his back from the gas-fire; if we have been involved in discussions on action stations, tactics, jammed machine-guns, or the ever-pressing question of whether leather gaiters should be stained dark brown or left pale yellow, the debate is broken off forthwith. Even the garlic-cum-geranium fumes of a gas-lecture are wafted away and our guard-room decontaminated in a twinkling—all by the production of these magic bits of pasteboard.

Mr. Benn is the only one of us whose face does not brighten when the joyful cry of "Antelopes!" goes round. Mr. Benn's subsistence allowance has for the last six months been carried away nightly in the pockets of the rest of us, so he groans a little and feels for his cigarette-making machine. A hundred times, when his last halfpenny has been swallowed up in the kitty, Mr. Benn has taken a lurid oath that he will play no more; but next time, when the cards are slapped under his nose, he repudiates his vows, groaning, sighing, shaking his head and constructing himself a ragged and powerful cigarette—before taking up the packs and shuffling them like the sportsman he is. We admire Mr. Benn. A man who allows himself to be brought to the brink of ruin night after night deserves to be admired. He is not obliged to play, of course, but when somebody once made the suggestion that he should share his assets amongst us at the beginning of the evening and then go peacefully off to bed it was vigorously rejected.

The marvel is that he still retains any capacity for astonishment at the hands dealt him, and yet not once but twenty times in an evening he will demand "Did anybody ever see such muck?"—and his desire to enlist sympathy by displaying hand after abominable hand to the ruthless gaze of us all may possibly contribute towards his nightly downfall.

Mr. Punnett and Mr. Tucker, whose

days of serious gambling date only from their admittance to "B" Section, take their seats at the table with a touch of devil-may-care about them. Little Mr. King sits down quietly enough, but his eyes are bright with anticipation, and his whole bearing is that of a man who sees the evening being brought to some useful purpose at last.

Mr. Corker, not allowing the change of atmosphere to interfere with whatever unflagging homily he is delivering at the moment, nevertheless takes a seat promptly in case he should be left with only the three-legged chair and the prominently-sprung sofa-end to choose between; and presently, sensing that his audience's minds are no longer receptive to his views on the Balkan situation, the scarcity of razor-blades or the vagaries of the internal combustion engine, he modulates neatly into reminiscences of card-playing adventures during what he still refers to as "The War." (This war has not yet started for Mr. Corker, though he is not without optimism.)

But it is our Section Leader who dominates the scene. It is a source of constant wonder to us that he, whose game is bridge—good bridge—should allow himself to be drawn into our game of wildly irrational rummy. We feel that a confirmed bridge-player who enters regularly upon an all-night rummy session—a rummy whose rules have been repeatedly mutilated in an effort to embrace our several conceptions of them—deserves little less than a Mention in Dispatches. So if our Section Leader does flick out his winning hand neatly and crisply on the table rather more often than the rest of us (and has to keep his winnings out of sight in his revolver holster to spare our feelings)—why, then, which of us would grudge him his successes? Untold copper cannot repair shattered sensibilities, and from Culbertson to Corker is a nerve-racking descent.

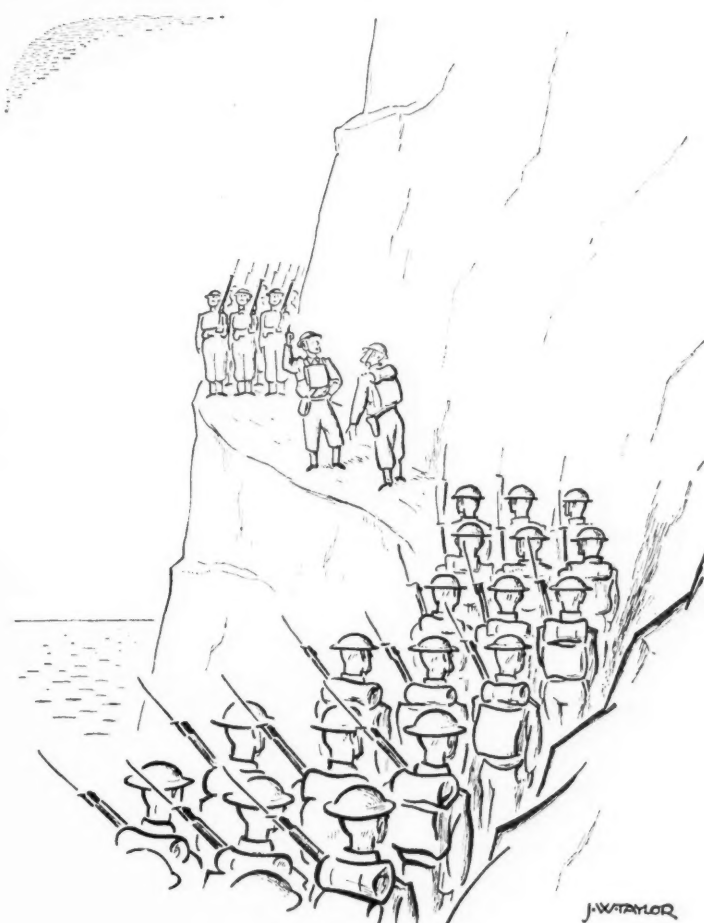
Rummy, in any of its myriad forms (and who ever found two devotees seeing eye to eye on its precepts?), is a tonic to our war-weary minds. Its strong element of luck, mainly due to the glorious omnipotence of each deuce or "joker," lends an almost electric tension to the deal, and it is interesting to note how each player reacts to the receipt of one or more of these blank cheques on the kitty. Mr. Benn, for instance, is unable to believe his eyes and is obliged to seek his next-door neighbour's confirmation that he has indeed been thus singled out by Providence. Mr. Corker (who draws each card towards him with great caution as it is dealt) adopts an air of

exaggerated nonchalance. Mr. Punnett and Mr. Tucker, on the other hand, try to throw us off the scent by groaning, clicking their tongues and displaying other symptoms of artificial despair. Our Section Leader, long schooled in defying the keen scrutiny of fellow bridge-players, is the only one who really deceives us by a consistent inscrutability of countenance.

We do not play a fast game. Mr. Corker sees to that, for not only does he remonstrate ceaselessly with his cards, upbraiding them for not being other than they are, but he has appointed himself coroner, and sits on the result of each hand. He launches into complicated reconstructions of the play, seeking to show how he would have fared if he had been sitting on the other side of the table, or what his fortunes would have been if Mr. Benn's last discard had been the six of clubs

instead of the king of hearts (usually described by Mr. Corker as "that — great king," though whether on account of its crimson trappings or its property of counting expensively against anyone unfortunate enough to be left holding it is not known).

Mr. Corker's evening is passed in a state of sustained astonishment at the hairbreadths of chance which cheat him of success. Cards constantly creep into his hand which have one pip too many or one too few; cards for which he would have sold his soul ten minutes ago fly to him like homing pigeons when he no longer wants them; this encourages him to change his policy and try to make a collection of them, only to find that as soon as he has decided on this bold plan, lo! the pack becomes barren of the things and he is left with a costly stock of incomplete sequences and a sense of monstrous



"Nor have the Blankshires ever broken ranks or retreated!"

ill-usage which any lesser man would be at a loss to put into words.

In view of this constant strain on Mr. Corker's nervous system it is perhaps only right that he should always leave the table with a small profit.

The form of Mr. Benn's play is another retarding factor. Although Mr. Benn has never had any luck within living memory, and never, in his heart of hearts, expects to have any to his dying day, he is always being tricked into believing that the impossible has happened. "Gentlemen!" he will say, trying to hide his welling exhilaration, but trembling a little nevertheless—"I've got a surprise for you! *I'm out!*" As we start incredulously to our feet he will lay out his cards with great deliberation, savouring his moment—only to find that what was a moment ago a king of hearts has been unaccountably bewitched into a knave of clubs, while the joker completing his sequence of diamonds has somehow disgraced itself by assuming a third pip which Mr. Benn could have sworn (and does) was not there before. As these irregularities are pointed out to him the light fades from his eyes and he slumps in his chair, knowing it for a mirage after all. "I'm sorry, gentlemen," he mutters brokenly, and sighs and shakes his head, and gathers up his cards.

Perhaps little Mr. King is the only player amongst us who would pass uncriticized by the cream of the card-playing world. Bright-eyed, aware, bird-like in movement, he maintains a silence which is only broken once in every hand as he darts an appraising glance at the kitty and remarks "Somebody 'asn't paid!" Such a wave of spontaneous guilt floods the company at this shaming charge that the more nervous of us hasten to put our half-

pennies in a second time, and are glad to do so if it excuses us from Mr. King's gaze of steely suspicion.

Mr. King plays a consistent game, and although he has never confessed to having won any money, neither has he ever complained of losing any. It is thought by some—though not an iota of evidence has ever been produced—that the deficits in the kitty on which he keeps so sharp an eye may possibly be due to carelessness on the part of little Mr. King himself.

It was due to rummy and to little Mr. King that a miracle was the other night worked in our midst. Mr. Corker, exhausted by hours of alternating fury and amazement, had retired to bed before the night's play was over. Three hours later, on rising to greet the dawn, he found that our Section Leader, Mr. Tucker, Mr. Curtis and Mr. King were still sitting where he had left them, silently playing cards. Mr. Corker, who did not look at the game very closely and did not notice that the table was innocent of the usual shallow piles of copper, began at once to talk. He talked to the players and then, as they did not respond, he talked to himself. He then whistled a little, and later began to sing. The company bore it as long as it could and then, to the astonishment of all, and particularly of Mr. Corker, little Mr. King kicked his chair away from beneath him and rose to his full height of five feet. Then he addressed Mr. Corker in these terms:

"Mr. Corker, please! We are 'aving whist!"

Mr. Corker's voice broke on a high note. "Well!" he said. And this is the only occasion on record when Mr. Corker has spoken a sentence of one word only—and then retired, abashed, into the outer darkness.

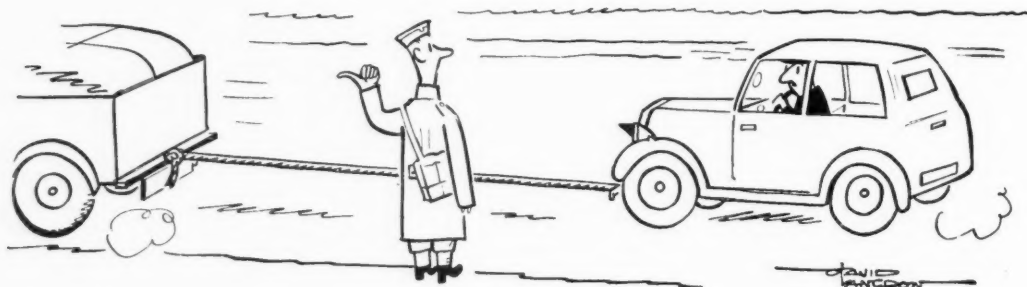
Behaviour

What do I do . . .

IF I SEE MRS. BLENKINSOP COMING DOWN THE ROAD TOWARDS ME?

I do not assume that she is a parachutist. I do not scatter. I remember that it is useless to try to form fours and sing the Swiss National Anthem. I do not panic. I advance quietly towards her, pretending that the parcel of library books under my arm is really my gas-mask. I do not comment upon her depressing appearance. I omit to point out that there is a ladder in her stocking. I address her in well modulated tones. I ask her if she has noted the recent decrease in our shipping losses. I inform her that my little nephew has drawn a really imaginative picture of the port of Bardia. I point out to her that I should be delighted to pass on to her the piece of highly significant information given me by my brother-in-law at the Air Ministry had he not already obtained a promise of secrecy from me upon the subject. I draw her out of the way of a passing motor omnibus. "No, Mrs. Blenkinsop," I reply coldly to her, "I have not heard the latest about Herr Goebbels, nor do I consider the repetition of such anecdotes to be in the very best of taste." I bow to her on leaving. I do not say Cheerio. I pass swiftly and decisively from her and enter the butcher's shop, where I disregard the instructions upon every alternate page in my ration book.

Cut this out and paste in into your photograph album. Your little grandchildren will get a good laugh out of it in 1983.



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